The Southern PATRIOT

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Voteless Spur Congress

Members Visited After Hearing

(By Staff Correspondent)

WASHINGTON, D. C. — Voteless citizens from the South made their voices heard here during the early days of February. The effects of their visit will be felt for a long time.

Negroes deprived of the right to vote had breakfast with a number of Congressmen and then saw others in their offices. They urged passage of strong civil rights legislation, especially a law to provide for federal registration of voters in the South.

Members of the House and Senate heard and read stories of harassment, economic reprisals, and physical violence resulting from efforts to exercise basic rights of citizens.

The U. S. Commission on Civil Rights and members of Congress received copies of testimony taken on January 31 at a mock hearing conducted by the Volunteer Civil Rights Commission. A transcript of the hearing was placed in the Congressional Record by Congresswoman Edith Green of Oregon.

This affair was held at a mass meeting in Asbury Methodist Church. The *Associated Press* reported that nearly 1,500 persons, about 40 per cent white, were present.

The mock hearing grew out of a U. S. Court order stopping the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights from taking testimony of voteless citizens in Louisiana last July.

Sixteen civic, religious, and civil rights organizations in the Southern states and the District of Columbia set up the volunteer Civil Rights Commission as a means of telling their story to Congress and the nation.

Members of the Volunteer Commission are the Rt. Rev. George W. Baber, Philadelphia, presiding bishop of the A.M.E. Church; the Rev. William Holmes Borders, Atlanta, president of the National Fraternal Council of Churches; Philip A. Camponeschi, executive secretary, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission of the City of Baltimore.

Also Dr. Roland P. Mackay, noted Chicago neurologist; Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, Washington Area, The Methodist Church, and the Rt. Rev. C. Ewbank Tucker, Louisville, presiding bishop of the A.M.E. Zion Church.

(Mr. Borders was unable to be present at the Jan. 31 hearing.)

The witnesses were questioned by members of the Commission and by Belford V. Lawson, Jr., Washington attorney who is counsel for the National Business League. Lawson was staff counsel for the Volunteer Commission.

Staff director was Dr. Charles G. Gomillion, president of the Tuskegee Civic Association in

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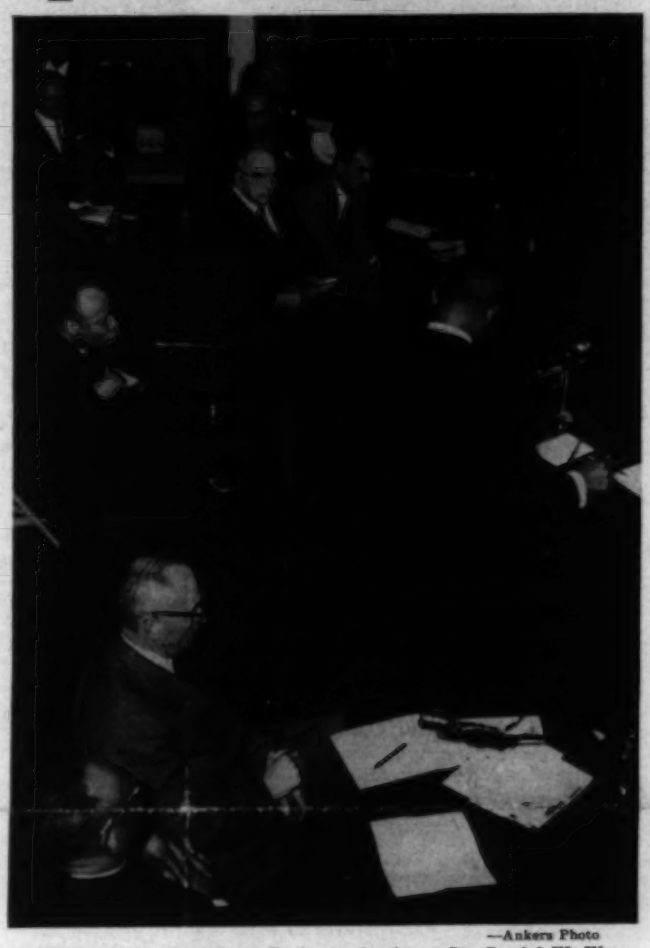

—Ankers Photo

VOTELESS CHAPLAIN at Tuskegee Institute, Dr. Daniel W. Wynn, sits at table in center to tell his story at Washington hearing. Standing at right is Belford V. Lawson, Jr., who questioned witnesses. Panel members are to right and left of witness.

Witness 'Put on Hot-Dog Stand'

At left below is John McFerren, a cotton farmer from Fayette County, Tenn. He is telling Belford V. Lawson, Jr., staff counsel for the Volunteer Civil Rights Commission, what happened after he complained about being denied the right to vote.

"The F.B.I. came out in the field and investigated me," the witness said. "When he investigated me, he brought back the report and gave the report to the sheriff. That put me on the hot-dog stand . . . immediately after then my life was threatened.

"From that day to this, my wife and family and myself were threatened. I was told: 'If you keep fooling with that voting issue, you will come up with a necktie around your neck.'"

Rev. E. B. Joyner, Gary, Ind., who was in the audience, later asked if it is standard procedure for the F.B.I. to turn over such reports to Southern sheriffs.

"That is common practice," replied the Rev. Fred L. Shuttlesworth, Birmingham civil rights leader, who was on the platform with the witnesses at the mock hearing.

McFerren was so overcome with emotion at one point in his testimony that he had to stop and rest a few minutes.

(Excerpts from stories of other witnesses at the hearing are on Page 3.)

Review of The Month

Demonstrations by Negro students against lunch counter segregation developed into a mass movement. The sit-ins started in Greensboro, N. C., and rapidly spread to other North Carolina cities, Virginia, South Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Kentucky, and Florida, involving thousands of students.

In some instances white students joined the protests. The movement reflected growing impatience of all Negroes and some whites with the slow pace of integration.

Segregationist attacks on Negro and white integration leaders continued with the arrest of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on a perjury charge. Alabama officials claimed he made false statements on income tax returns. King said it was just another attempt to harass him.

In Tennessee, a circuit judge revoked the charter of Highlander Folk School and ordered the school properties into receivership. He ruled that the private school violated state segregation laws by holding integrated workshops and classes. Highlander planned an appeal and a continued fight to exist.

In Florida, a hearing was postponed on contempt charges against Negro ministers who refused to let a legislative committee check NAACP membership lists. In Washington, the Supreme Court struck down fines imposed by Little Rock and North Little Rock, Ark., on NAACP leaders who refused to identify local members.

On the school front, Knoxville, Tenn., was added to the list of cities under court order to submit desegregation plans.

Keep Writing!

The mock hearing and visitations in Washington pointed up the need for continuous requests to senators and representatives to vote for strong civil rights laws.

So keep up the letters, telegrams, phone calls, and personal visits until a good bill is passed. Get your friends to do the same. A simple, two-sentence letter is as good as a long letter. Just so you let senators and representatives know what you want.

Louisiana Denied Membership List

NEW ORLEANS, La. — A three-judge federal court ruled that the NAACP does not have to comply with a Louisiana law requiring organizations to file membership lists.

The decision is of major importance to the integration movement in the South. Attempts to publicize membership rolls of integration groups—thus subjecting members to reprisals—has been a favorite weapon of segregationists.

The court said that forcing the NAACP to comply would violate the First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech and assembly.

The judges also ruled that another law aimed at the NAACP would require the impossible and is clearly unconstitutional. This law required a Louisiana chapter of an organization with affiliates in other states to attest that officers of affiliates were not connected with groups cited by Congress as "subversive."

'Basically A Religious Issue'

At the close of the Jan. 31 civil rights hearing in Washington, Methodist Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam declared:

"The whole issue that encompasses the subject of segregation is primarily, from my point of view, not a political issue—not an economic issue.

"It is basically a religious issue, because the Lord I seek to follow said, 'A new commandment I give unto you, That you love one another.' May I suggest to you that you do not segregate people you love.

"Consequently we violate one of the fundamental principles of the faith when we do segregate, and it becomes basically a religious issue.

"This whole question of voting, to me, is incredible—that in 1960 men and women must come here in a democracy and ask for the privilege of voting. It is incredible that we have to face that.

"All we are here to do is to see that sooner or later the fundamental principles of democracy become applied. I am of the opinion that when the Negro has the vote and exercises his franchise as a free man, political, economic and other problems will fall into line because there is power in the vote and that is precisely where we need to be upon this issue."

—Maurice Sorrell Photo

PART OF BIG CROWD at civil rights hearing in Asbury Methodist Church, Washington, on Sunday, January 31.

The Southern Patriot

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News In Brief

Integration came quietly to southwest Virginia as nine Negro students entered a formerly all-white school in Floyd County. It was the first instance of desegregation in that part of the state and the smallest Virginia community to integrate thus far. There were no incidents.

* * *

In Chapel Hill, N. C., a citizens committee has asked the School Board to initiate a desegregation plan that will "take the burden off individual students and parents." The board voted last year to begin a grade-a-year plan in the fall of 1960, but under its plan students themselves would have to apply for transfers from segregated schools. The citizens' committee said this was "grossly unfair." A Chapel Hill Quaker group had previously also asked a better plan.

* * *

In Memphis, Negroes are boycotting all local automobile dealers because they were excluded from a recent auto show in that city. Negro leaders point out that Negro auto purchases in Memphis over the years have amounted to more than $40 million.

* * *

In North Carolina, racists have won another victory against Dr. A. E. Perry, Jr., militant Monroe Negro doctor who dared to call the world's attention to the famous "Kissing Case" of two little Negro boys. The State Board of Medical Examiners revoked Dr. Perry's medical license. He is currently serving a prison term on an abortion charge, which his many supporters declare is a frame-up.

* * *

In Montgomery, the Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy has been elected president of the Montgomery Improvement Association. He succeeds Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who has moved to Atlanta.

* * *

Thirty-three leading Southern educators, including five college presidents, issued a statement warning against closing of public schools. They said it would lead to "collapse of our democratic society."

* * *

In Greensboro, N. C., the interracial Ministerial Fellowship elected a Negro as its president for the first time. He is the Rev. C. W. Anderson, pastor of United Institutional Baptist Church.

Party March 22

Friends and supporters of SCEF are invited to a reception at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 22, in the Music Room, Hotel Biltmore, Madison Avenue at 43rd St., New York City.

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt will be guest of honor. The Hon. Hubert T. Delany will serve as chairman. Speakers will include Bishop Edgar A. Love, of The Methodist Church; John M. Coe, Pensacola, Fla., president of the National Lawyers Guild; the Rev. Sandy F. Ray, pastor, Cornerstone Baptist Church, Brooklyn, and Aubrey W. Williams, SCEF president.

If you plan to attend, please notify Maurice Mogulescu, co-chairman of New York Friends of SCEF, at 106 Washington Place, New York 11, N. Y.

Bishop Love and Coe will also speak at an SCEF meeting in Philadelphia March 24.

Book Notes: Some Useful Pamphlets

CRACKING THE COLOR LINE, by JIM PECK, Published by Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), 38 Park Row, New York 38, N. Y., $1. (Reduced prices on quantity orders.)

A dramatic presentation of the CORE technique of direct non-violent action to end racial discrimination. The pamphlet tells how the technique has been used against segregation in schools,

YOUR COOPERATION CAN HELP US END DISCRIMINATION
WHAT WE ASK IS SIMPLE-IMPARTIAL SERVICE FOR ALL
CORE PROTESTS JIM CROW RESTAURANT SERVICE

A CORE PICKET LINE

housing, job opportunities, restaurants, theatres, etc., and for voting rights. A special section deals with action in the South.

The booklet is an effective guide to action and should be studied by every person concerned with ending segregation. It is illustrated by 25 photographs, one of which is reproduced in this column.

RACE AND CONSCIENCE IN AMERICA, A Review Prepared by the American Friends Service Committee, University of Oklahoma Press, (Available from AFSC, 20 S. 12th St., Philadelphia, 50c.)

This 53-page booklet was prepared by an interracial "working party" of 14 persons, assembled from various parts of the country by AFSC. Their mandate was to "study where we as a people stand in the matter of race relations, to inquire where we ought to be, and to propose methods of bridging the gap."

The writers review the history of discrimination in America and eloquently restate the moral dilemma facing the nation today. They then suggest practical steps every individual can take to meet the problem.

"We are a society facing both ways," they state. "There is only one way out of this dilemma. That way requires each American to consider his own responsibility."

MIRACLE OF SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT, Desegregation in the Washington, D. C., Schools, by CARL F. HANSEN, Published by Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 515 Madison Ave., New York 22, N. Y., 35c.

This 70-page report on Washington school desegregation, written by the superintendent of that city's schools, was published several years ago but continues to be timely and helpful—especially for people in communities where the shift to desegregation still lies ahead.

It deals with preparation for desegregation, the transition period and the continuing struggle against prejudice after the change was made.

FELLOWSHIP FOR WHOM? by HERMAN H. LONG, Published by Race Relations Dept., Congregational Christian Churches, Fisk University, Nashville, 50c. This is a report on a self-survey by the Congregational Christian Church. The survey was undertaken to determine the extent to which local churches of this denomination were living up to their "professed standards of racial inclusiveness." Over 1,000 congregations took part in the study.

While some of the findings are negative, some progress is indicated by the fact that 26.6 per cent of the congregations can be classified as racially inclusive, compared with 17 percent in a study 12 years ago.

But the most important thing about the study is the very fact that it was *made*. It could well serve as a model to other denominations.

SAVE OUR SCHOOLS, A Round-up of Southern Press Opinion, Published by Dept. of Christian Social Relations, United Church Women, (475 Riverside Dr., New York City) and several other church groups.

A collection of editorial comments from Southern newspapers calling for continued public education in the integration crisis. States with papers represented include Virginia, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Tennessee, Arkansas, Alabama, and Delaware.

A University of Texas student committee announced that it will withold approval of any cafe near the school which refuses service to Negro students.

Race Relations Writer Dies

Louis E. Burnham, noted race relations writer, died February 12 at the age of 44. He was stricken suddenly while giving a Negro History Week lecture before the Intercultural Club in New York.

Burnham was widely known in the South, where he was active for many years in youth and civil rights work. While in the South, he was a board member of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare. In recent years he was associate editor and race relations writer for *The National Guardian*. His reporting of the integration struggle won him a reputation as one of the most able and perceptive writers in this field. He lived in Brooklyn.

'Why I Believe In Integration . . .'

Author Says Segregation Thwarts Full Life

BY ALICE COBB

(Alice Cobb is an author of both juvenile and adult books and a teacher in the field of religious education. Now on leave from the faculty of Scarritt College, Nashville, she is presently on the staff of Highlander Folk School. She is an SCEF board member and active in other interracial groups.)

My reasons for believing in racial integration of course include many economic, social, moral and religious ones.

But laying aside sweet reasonableness, I admit I'm irrational on the subject, and emotional and biased. I haven't determined objectively what is the right stand and bravely taken it. It's a personal matter.

I want the right to live where I please, entertain and be entertained where I choose, sell my house to the person I want to, go to the movies with whomever I choose, and sit beside anybody on a bus that I care to sit by.

If I had children I'd want them free to go home with other nice children, regardless of color, and bring those children to our house to play or stay all night or for supper.

If my daughter wanted to marry a Negro (and if he wanted to marry her), I would want the right to hold her wedding in the church we belonged to and to have her fiancee's little sister as a member of the wedding.

I want to seek my friends and associate with them freely without gesturing to color barriers.

I want to be able to *dislike* people regardless of color too!

I want the right to be liked or disliked as a person by all other persons.

I have at stake the living of a whole life, which I hold to be sacred and obligatory, and which for me is dependent for its fullness on the extent to which I can share the important experiences of life with other human beings. It seems logical to me that if the right to freedom of association in work, play, worship and friendship is limited for others, it is categorically denied to me.

Segregation would rob me of some of the deepest friendships and the most important social and religious experiences of my life. I believe in integration because I couldn't believe in anything else—or less.

—Photo by Thorston Horton
MISS ALICE COBB

Quotations to Remember

"The first thing we must do is accept the fact that it (human relations) is our personal responsibility, and not simply the next fellow's . . . I suggest that you act as though the whole solution of the problem depends on you."—**Mrs. Sarah Patton Boyle,** white integration leader in Virginia, addressing a group of parents and teachers.

"This means, more than anything else, that we have become a Negro community united with a sense of selfless altruism—we are concerned about each other's common welfare."—**The Rev. I. H. Dunlap,** Negro leader in Prince Edward County, Va., commenting on the solid refusal of the community's Negroes to give up their struggle for integration and accept the private segregated school offered by whites.

"The right to vote is a constitutional right . . . Properly, the obligation to enforce it is a state obligation. When the state defaults, the federal duty impinges."—**The Charlotte (N.C.) Observer,** in an editorial.

"I'm afraid it's a mean, a little thing we're doing to the handful of colored pupils; and therefore a mean thing we're doing to ourselves."—**James McBride Dabbs,** author and president of the Southern Regional Council, discussing "token desegregation" as being practiced under North Carolina's pupil placement law.

—Maurice Sorrell Photo

STUDY IN CONCENTRATION are these participants in mock hearing. From left are Belford V. Lawson, Jr., V.C.R.C. staff counsel; the Rev. Fred L. Shuttlesworth, Birmingham, and Dr. Charles G. Gomillion, staff director for the Volunteer Commission.

Congress Spurred

(Continued from Page 1)

Alabama, who had assembled the witnesses from five Southern states and the District of Columbia.

General chairman of the meeting was Bishop Edgar A. Love, Baltimore Area, The Methodist Church, a vice-president of the Southern Conference Educational Fund. The hearing was preceded by invocation by the Rev. James J. Reeb of All Souls' Church, Washington, and a brief welcome by the Rev. James D. Foy, pastor of Asbury Methodist Church.

The responsive audience soon identified itself with the 10 witnesses. The gathering was occasionally moved to laughter, but the dominant reaction was one of shock at the heart-rending stories told by the voteless citizens.

Bishop Oxnam summed it up near the end when he said it was incredible "that in 1960 men and women must come here in a democracy and ask for the privilege of voting." (See full statement on Page 1.)

Dr. Gomillion offered a resolution which was adopted by the audience. It proposed, among other things, the restoration of Title III of the Civil Rights Act of 1957, the enforcement provision which was cut out of the act before its passage.

The resolution also called upon Congress to enact "a measure which would enable the federal government to provide for registration and voting of eligible citizens in federal, state and local elections where the local and state machinery fails to function. Such provision is embodied in House Bill No. 7957 now in the Administration Committee of the U. S. House of Representatives."

This resolution was in the material presented to Congress by the voteless witnesses and by officials of some organizations that brought them to Washington. Among leaders accompanying the witnesses on visits to members of Congress were:

Miss Ella J. Baker, Atlanta, executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; the Rev. Fred L. Shuttlesworth, Birmingham, president of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights, secretary of the SCLC, and a board member of SCEF; Donald Stephens, Arden, Dela., SCEF board member.

Also Aubrey W. Williams, Montgomery, Ala., president of SCEF and former director of the National Youth Administration; Amzie Moore, Cleveland, Miss., and Dr. Aaron Henry, Clarksdale, Miss., officials of the Regional Council of Negro Leadership, and Hilbert L. Bradley, Gary, Ind., attorney and legislative chairman of the Gary NAACP branch.

In addition to the Southern organizations already mentioned, sponsors of the mock hearing and subsequent events were the Baptist Ministers Conference of Washington and Vicinity; Elks Civil Liberties League of Washington, D. C.; Methodist Ministers Union of Washington and Vicinity; Montgomery Improvement Association; National Fraternal Council of Churches; Non-Partisan Voters League of Mobile, Ala.; North Carolina Progressive Civic Union; Tennessee Civic Leagues; Tuskegee Civic Association; United Christian Movement of Louisiana; Veterans Benefit of America, Inc., and Walker-Lassiter Defense Fund of North Carolina.

Leaders of most of these organizations met after the hearing. They agreed to continue to work together to enable the voteless to speak—and eventually to vote.

It was stressed that this will be a movement of and by Southerners to present their case to friends in the rest of the country.

On Feb. 6, the *Afro-American* advised the voteless citizens of Washington: "We must join forces with our Southern friends . . . We cannot determine our own fate as long as millions in the South are voteless."

Extra Patriots

Additional copies of this issue of The Patriot can be obtained at the special price of 10c a copy or $3.50 per hundred. A tape recording of the mock hearing, lasting 58 minutes and playing at a speed of 7½, costs $15. A phonograph record with the same material, playing at 33⅓, cost $12. Write to SCEF, 822 Perdido St., New Orleans 12, La.

Other Witnesses Heard

WASHINGTON, D. C. — Highly educated people from Tuskegee Institute, Ala., were among those who told the Volunteer Civil Rights Commission how they were denied the right to register and vote.

Dr. Daniel W. Wynn, chaplain and professor of philosophy, spent more than an hour filling out a four-page questionnaire for the Macon County Board of Registrars in July, 1957. He also copied part of the U. S. Constitution in longhand and read another part aloud to one of the registrars.

Dr. Wynn

He returned 15 months later to ask why he had not heard from the board. "I was advised that if I had not heard from them it was because I had failed in the examination," the doctor of philosophy said.

Miss Fidelia JoAnne Adams, a student in the Department of Nutrition at Tuskegee, had to wait more than 3 hours before even being admitted to the registrars' office in August, 1958.

Miss Adams

She then filled out an application blank and copied all of Article II of the Constitution. Five months later, having heard nothing from the registrars, she complained to the Attorney General of Alabama. She heard nothing from him either.

She added that the Board of Registrars has not functioned at all since December, 1958.

Prof. J. N. Blankenship, a retired teacher from Saline, La., was one of 630 Negroes purged from the voting rolls in Bienville Parish. He was told that his registration application was incorrect. This despite the fact that he taught school for 34 years. He also owns 500 acres of land. "I am taxed without representation," he declared.

J. N. Blankenship

Dr. Blankenship was one of 68 persons barred from testifying before the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights by a U. S. judge in Shreveport last July. The judge said the registrars' rights might be violated because they would not be allowed to cross-examine their accusers—the voteless Negroes.

Another retired teacher, Prof. S. T. Nero, tried to register in his home town of Holly Springs, Miss., more than a year ago. He was told that he had not passed the examination. This involved reading, writing and interpreting an article of the Constitution.

Prof. Nero

Professor Nero said he influenced others to try and register "and they were given about the same treatment they gave me." These people included a teacher in the college where Dr. Nero formerly taught.

Grafton R. Gray, a farmer and ex-teacher from Tallahatchie County, Miss., tried to pay his poll tax and register three times. "I was told by the deputy sheriff that no Negroes could pay poll taxes in Tallahatchie County. Many of us are afraid to register because of fear of loss of jobs, loss of credit, and violence."

G. R. Gray

Because of his efforts to gain voting rights, Gray was fired as a teacher after serving about 12 years. Efforts to intimidate him were made by men who stopped his car while he was out driving with his family.

Mrs. Louise Lassiter, a farm wife from near Seaboard, N. C., said: "We are given an educational test which is not known to be given to any member of the white race . . . This test is really not a test but is more of a trial for Negroes applying for registration.

Mrs. Lassiter

"The registrar gives you a copy of the Constitution to read from and you begin reading until she says stop. You ask her if you passed and she says 'No, you mispronounced a word.' Everything had to be in perfect order to pass. Another test is taking dictation from the registrar as she reads the Constitution. In this test, you fail if you do not dot an 'i' or cross a 't.'"

Fruitless efforts to register in Haywood County, Tenn., were described by Curry P. Boyd, a school teacher. He said the state and county election commissions conspired to exclude Negroes from registration. After many attempts to register, the Negroes formed a league to work for their rights.

C. P. Boyd

"When we registered our charter in the Courthouse, a white man took his stick and beat one of our members to the extent that he had to receive stitches in his face," Boyd related.

The teacher was fired from his job and fined for minor offenses for which white people are never bothered. Other league members have been threatened, denied bank loans, and forced to move away.

Boyd said he wants federal election registrars. "I do not wish to see any local people handle the situation because of what they have done in Tennessee so far," he declared.

The case for the District of Columbia was presented by the Rev. E. Franklin Jackson, president of the D. C. Branch of NAACP. He said: "My story is the story of 820,000 people, both white and Negro, both Jew and gentile, both Protestant and Catholic, who are treated in the nation's capital, the capital of the greatest nation in the world, as if they were criminals and thereby having no right to participate in self-government."

Rev. Jackson

He said the people in the dist-

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(Copies of photos used in the above article can be obtained from Del Ankers Photographers, 316 F St. N.E., Washington, D. C. Copies of photos credited to Maurice Sorrell in this issue of The Patriot can be obtained by writing Mr. Sorrell at 5700 New Hampshire Ave., N.E., Washington 11, D. C.)

—Maurice Sorrell Photo

VOLUNTEER COMMISSION on Civil Rights was photographed after mock hearing. From left are Dr. Roland P. Mackay, Bishop George W. Baber, Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, Bishop Edgar A. Love, and Bishop C. Ewbank Tucker. Inset is Philip A. Camponeschi. Bishop Love was general chairman.